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ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of a 1983 survey of external (distance education) students' attitudes toward and use of publications and study materials issued by the School of External Studies and Continuing Education at the University of Queensland. The use and evaluation of regional and central support services were also studied. Data from the 397 responses received provided information on the following: (1) student characteristics such as age, sex, grade point average, degree program enrolled in, number of years as a distance education student at Queensland, and regional distribution; (2) reasons for study, choice of distance education study, and subject area; (3) mode of study, i.e., whether students had previous experience as either an on- or off-campus student, and whether they preferred part or full time study; (4) the workload imposed by the subjects students were enrolled in; (5) their use of such introductory materials as the External Studies Handbook, the information booklet "University and You," "How to Study" booklet, and Thatcher Library pamphlet; (6) course materials including course guides and readers, lecture notes, textbooks, and audiotapes; (7) ownership of video- and audiocassette recorders and personal computers; (8) regional contact with officers-in-charge, librarians, study centers, tutorial and study groups, and individual student contact; (9) contact with the St. Lucia campus; (10) use of library services; and (11) attitudes toward assignments and examinations. Data are presented in both narrative and tabular format, and each section includes a summary of the information therein. A list of general student comments concludes the document. (DB)

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No. 10

A SURVEY OF USE AND EVALUATION OF SUPPORT SERVICES BY EXTERNAL STUDENTS 1983

Mavis E. Kelly

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September 1986

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1 Introduction

The aim of the Survey conducted at the end of 1983 was to collect information on a sample of the population of external students enrolled in that year, to assess their reactions to publications and study materials issued by the School of External Studies and Continuing Education, and to determine use and evaluation of support services, both regional and central.

Until 1983 staff who taught and administered the external studies program at the University of Queensland had two options open to them in the area of evaluation of courses and administrative procedures:

(a) they could use a standard *Course Evaluation Questionnaire* which had been designed by the Teaching Committee of the Council of the Division of External Studies

(b) they could design their own evaluation questionnaires tailored to specific courses either alone or in consultation with staff of the Course Development Unit or the Tertiary Education Institute.

Both options are still open but an additional survey was needed because:

(a) the *Course Evaluation Questionnaire* dealt with both course-specific matters and issues of a general administrative nature e.g. student characteristics, general administration of the School and use of student support services. (This meant that each time a student replied to the Questionnaire for a given subject, he/she was required to repeat answers to questions of a general kind. In some cases this appeared to lead to a decline in responses to this Questionnaire.)

(b) the Questionnaire was returned to lecturers in charge of courses, and hence administrative staff could not access information which directly concerned them

(c) specific questionnaires designed by lecturers did not usually focus on administrative matters and were not available to administrative staff in the School

(d) there was no general information on student charactersitics apart from that collected on the University's enrolment form and no comprehensive information on use of study materials and support services.

(e) a survey of the counselling needs of external students had been conducted by Thiele (1980)[1] and in the intervening period many of the recommendations of this survey had been put into practice. This survey was comprehensive but focussed primarily on student characteristics, difficulties and perceived needs and use of some support services. From the point of view of administration of the School however a more detailed survey was required.

Hence it was decided to design a separate survey which would be administered to a sample of external students at regular intervals in order to record this information and to ascertain ways in which characteristics of the student population changed over time.

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[1] **Thiele, H.W.L. (1980) A Survey of the Counselling Needs of External Students at the University of Queensland Working Papers in Distance Education No.3**

The 1983 Survey covered the following topics:

1. student characteristics
2. reasons for study
3. mode of study - experienced and preferred
4. subject workloads
5. use of introductory materials
6. newsletters
7. course materials
8. video and audio cassette recorders - ownership
9. personal computers - ownership
10. regional contact
11. contact with St Lucia campus
12. library services
13. assessment procedures
14. further comments

This report presents the results of the 1983 Survey. Given the scope of the Survey, further questions can always be asked of the data should the need arise. Comparisons can also be made with results of subsequent surveys in order to discern trends in student characteristics and their evaluations of the course materials, teaching and support services offered to them.

2 Population and sample

The 1983 Survey was mailed to a random sample of undergraduates currently enrolled in external courses. The sample was stratified by faculty in which students were enrolled. Only undergraduates were surveyed because the survey did not specifically address the needs of post-graduate students which may be assumed to be quite different from their undergraduate counterparts.

The Survey was mailed out in November 1983 to students who were still enrolled which meant that those who received it had survived the academic year to that stage.

Sample and population sizes by faculty are shown in Table 2.1 below.

Faculty	Population size (N)	% Total Enrolment	Sample size (N)	% Population
Arts	1173	61.74	391	33.30
Education	317	16.68	106	33.44
Commerce & Economics	306	16.11	102	33.33
Law	104	5.47	35	32.70
Total	1900	100.00	634	33.37

Table 2.1. Sample and population sizes by faculty.

A follow-up letter was sent to all students who had not returned the survey by the first week of January 1984. The total number of responses received was 397 or 62.62% of the total sample and 20.89% of the target population. Number and percent of responses received by faculty are shown in table 2.2 below.

Faculty	Responses Received	
	N	% total
Arts	251	63.40
Education	61	15.40
Commerce and Economics	64	16.20
Law	13	3.30
Other	7	1.80
Total	397	100.00

Table 2.2 Number and percent of responses received

Comparison of tables 2.1 and 2.2 shows that the percent of responses received by faculty is quite close to the percent of total enrolment in each faculty.

3 Coding and Analysis

The survey results were coded and then analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) on the University of Queensland's KL10 Mainframe computer.

In completing the survey students were asked to give their name or student number. Thus in addition to information obtained from the survey, student enrolment records were queried to retrieve information on the following for each respondent:

(a) sex

(b) age in years (1983)

(c) overall Grade Point Average (GPA) for 1983

This information was appended to the coded survey information.

In order to make the information more manageable for crosstabulations, several variables were recoded : age, GPA, degree enrolled, years of external study, postcodes. These recoded variables were appended to the coded information.

Five types of analysis were carried out using SPSS:

(a) frequency counts on all variables

(b) cross tabulation of all relevant variables with selected student characteristics :

sex

age

years of external study

degree enrolled

1983 Grade Point Average

region.

(c) non parametric correlations between selected student characteristics

(d) breakdowns on several variables by age and GPA and one-way analyses of variance on these variables.

(e) crosstabulations of selected student characteristic variables.

4 Survey Results

Characteristics of Respondents
Questionnaire Items

1.1 Student Number or Name

1.2 Please indicate your post code

1.3 What degree are you currently enrolled in?

B.A.
B.A./LL.B.
B.Com.
B.Econ.
B.Ed.Stud.
LL.B.
M.Ed.Admin.
M.Ed.Stud.
M.Lit.Stud.
Other (please specify)

1.5 How many years have you been enrolled for your current degree externally at the University of Queensland (including 1983)?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 or more

4.1 Characteristics of respondents

For all respondents, information on sex, age and grade point average (GPA) was obtained from student enrolment records. Information on faculty enrolled, years of external study and postcode was obtained from the survey.

4.1.1 Sex

Of all respondents, 35.70% were male and 64.30% were female. University of Queensland 1983 enrolment statistics[2] show that 39.45% of external students were male and 60.55% were female. These latter figures are, however current for April of that year, not November, and some shift in proportion of male vs female enrolments may have occurred in the interim.

---

[2] Statistics 1983, University of Queensland.

4.1.2 Age

The age range for respondents was 18 to 66 years with a mean age of 34.35 years. The mean age for males was 33.07 years and for females 35.07 years. A One Way Analysis of Variance showed a significant difference between the mean ages of males and females ($F=4.472$, $p < .05$). The median age for all respondents was 33.18 years. The median age for external students enrolled in April 1983 was 30.5 years.

There was a significant difference between ages of respondents according to years of external study ($F=7.528$, $p < .05$). Not surprisingly age increased with years of study. There was also a significant difference in age according to degree enrolled ($F=4.097$, $p < .05$). The variable degree enrolled was grouped into five categories: Arts, Law, Commerce and Economics, Education, Miscellaneous Other. Students in Arts and Miscellaneous Other degrees were older (mean ages 35.57 and 36.00) than those in Law (31.00) Commerce and Economics (32.18) and Education (31.44). Age did not differ significantly by region.

For all crosstabulations, respondents were grouped into four groups by age: 25 years or less (20.2%), 26 to 35 years (45.3%), 36 to 45 years (23.4%), 46 or more years (11.1%).

Crosstabulation of sex by age groups did not show a significant relation between sex and these groups.

4.1.3 Grade Point Average

At the University of Queensland, Grade Point Average is measured on a scale from 1 to 7 with 7 representing the highest grade. A GPA of 4 represents a pass grade. The mean Grade Point Average for respondents was 4.62. For males it was 4.40 and for females 4.74. A One Way Analysis of Variance showed a significant difference between GPA for males and females. ($F=7.753$, $p < .05$). There was however no significant difference between age groups, years of study, region, or degree enrolled for GPA.

For the purpose of crosstabulation GPA was grouped into four categories as follows:

GPA less than 4 (13.9%)

GPA 4 (37.0%)

GPA 5 (28.0%)

GPA 6 or more (21.2%)

4.1.4 Degree enrolled

(Question 1.3)

Sixty three point one percent of respondents were currently enrolled in a B.A. degree. Respondents were distributed over degrees as follows.

Degree enrolled	N	%
BA	250	63.1
BA/LLB	4	1.0
B Com	40	10.1
B Econ	24	6.1
B Ed Stud	60	15.2
LL B	9	2.3
M Ed Stud	1	0.3
Other	7	1.8
Total	395	100.0

Table 4.1 Percentage of respondents by degree enrolled

For purpose of crosstabulation four categories of degree enrolled were used:

Arts (63.4%)

Law (3.3%)

Commerce and Economics (16.2%)

Education (15.4%)

There were 1.8% of cases in the "other" category which was not used subsequently in crosstabulations.

Crosstabulation of sex by categories of degree enrolled showed that sex was significantly related to degree enrolled. (Chi Square = 55.73, df = 3, $p < .01$.) In Arts, females predominated over males : 72.5% versus 27.5%. Females were also more prominent in Education : 78.2% versus 21.8%. In Law the percentages were approximately equal : 46.2% of males versus 53.8% of females. In Commerce and Economics however males were more prominent : 75.0% versus 25.0%.

4.1.5 Number of Years Enrolled Externally at University of Queensland

(Question 1.5)

Of all respondents, one quarter (25.2%) had been enrolled for their current degree externally at the University of Queensland for one year.

Years of external study	N	%
1 year	100	25.2
2 years	76	19.1
3 years	64	16.1
4 years	51	12.8
5 years	37	9.3
6 years	14	3.5
7 years	24	6.0
8 years	8	2.0
9+ years	18	4.5
Missing	5	1.3
Total	397	100

Table 4.2 Percentage of respondents by years of external study.

For purposes of crosstabulation the variable "years of external enrolment" was collapsed into four categories:

1 and 2 years (44.4%)

3 and 4 years (29.0%)

5 and 6 years (12.9%)

7 plus years (12.6 %)

1.3% of cases were missing.

4.1.6 Regional distribution

(Question 1.2)

Postcodes were grouped into regions to give an indication of the regional distribution of respondents. Postcodes were available for 362 respondents. The distribution was as follows:

Region	N	%
New South Wales	18	5.0
Victoria	17	4.7
Brisbane	83	22.9
Gold Coast	31	8.6
Ipswich	24	6.6
Toowoomba	36	9.7
Western Queensland	13	3.6
Sunshine Coast	74	20.4
Rockhampton	12	3.3
Mackay	19	5.2
Townsville	15	4.1
Cairns	21	5.8
Total	362	100.00

Table 4.3 Percentage of respondents by region

For crosstabulation purposes the number of regions was reduced to seven:

New South Wales and Victoria (9.7%)

Brisbane (22.9%)

Gold and Sunshine Coasts (29.0%)

Ipswich and Toowoomba (16.3%)

Western Queensland (3.6%)

Rockhampton and Mackay (8.6%)

Townsville and Cairns (9.9%)

4.1.7 Correlations between student characteristics

Spearman's Rank Order correlations between the key student characteristics gave the following results.

sex by age	r=0.05	n.s.
sex by degree	r=-0.07	$p < .05$

sex by years external study	r=0.01	n.s.
sex by GPA	r=0.01	$p < .05$
sex by degree enrolled	r=-0.12	$p < .01$
age by years external study	r=0.25	$p < .01$
age by GPA	r=-0.03	n.s.
degree enrolled by years external study	r=0.03	n.s.
degree enrolled by GPA	r=0.01	n.s.
years external study by GPA	r=0.08	n.s.

Table 4.4 Correlations between student characteristics

In particular, sex was significantly correlated with degree enrolled and GPA. Age was significantly correlated with degree enrolled and years of external study.

Results of crosstabulations with student characteristics were interpreted with caution where variables were known to be correlated.

4.1.8 Summary

The survey respondents were composed of more females than males and this is the case with the population of students enrolled in external studies. The female group was significantly older than the male group and in 1983 outperformed the male group in terms of overall Grade Point Average for that year. On average both male and female groups were in their early to mid thirties and both were performing in the GPA 4-5 range which is the pass-credit range of performance. Arts students were significantly older than those in Law, Commerce and Economics and Education and the highest percentage of students was enrolled in the Arts faculty.

Females outnumbered males in Arts and Education, numbers were approximately equal in Law and males outnumbered females in Commerce and Economics.

In terms of regional distribution of respondents most clustered around Brisbane, the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, Ipswich and Toowoomba (68.2%) so that a high proportion lived within one and one half hours driving distance of the St Lucia campus. The rest were scattered widely throughout rural Queensland and inter-state. On all important student characteristics this sample seemed to reflect the characteristics of the population of external students at the University of Queensland in 1983.

Student characteristics were used extensively in the survey analysis in order to explore age, sex and GPA differences in patterns of responding to questions as well as differences attributable to degree enrolled, years of external study and region.

Reasons for Study
Questionnaire items

2.1 What was your **main** reason for deciding to enrol for your current degree at the University of Queensland **in the first instance?**

To improve employment or career opportunities
To gain a degree for personal satisfaction
For intellectual stimulation
Other (please comment)

2.2 What was your **main** reason for choosing your **major** area of external study for your current degree at the University of Queensland?

Assessment considerations
Compatible with past study
Compatible with work experience
Compatible with abilities e.g. literary, numerical, problem solving
Only area of some interest which was available externally
Retraining/different career
To open up a new area of personal interest
Recommendation of a friend
Other (please comment)

4.2 Reasons for Study

4.2.1 Choice of external study

(Question 2.1)

Students were asked what was their **main** reason in the first instance for deciding to enrol for their current degree at the University of Queensland. Some students gave more than one reason here. The main reason given was to improve employment or career opportunities (54.5%). Note that in Thiele's (1980) Survey this ws also the major reason given with 63% of his sample studying for utilitarian reasons. However 34.3% wanted intellectual stimulation and 25.4% wanted to gain a degree for personal satisfaction. A small number gave reasons such as meeting people, financial problems, to overcome problems experienced with previous attempts at study (2.5%). We then asked whether reason for study was related to any of the student characteristics on which we had data: sex, age, GPA, degree enrolled, years of external study, region. Cross-tabulations were performed for each of the three main reasons for study with each student characteristic variable.

The reason **to improve employment or career opportunities** was significant when crosstabulated with **sex.** A higher percentage of males gave this as a reason than females; 62.77% males compared to 48.78% of females. (Chi square = 6.38, df = 1, $p<.05$.)

The reason to **improve employment or career opportunities** was also significantly crosstabulated with **degree enrolled.** Education (73.77%) and Commerce and Economics

(73.44%) students gave this reason more often than Law (53.85%) and Arts (45.42%) students. (Chi square = 26.76, df = 3, p<.01)

We then asked whether this latter effect could be attributed to different proportions of the sexes in the various degrees. Since men may be more likely than women to give improvement of career and employment opportunities as a reason for study, could it be that there were more men enrolled in Education and Commerce and Economics degrees than in Law and Arts degrees? The previous crosstabulation of sex by degree enrolled showed that men outnumbered women in Commerce and Economics but that the reverse was true of Education.

However we did a crosstabulation of employment as a reason for study by degree enrolled for each sex taken separately. For males there was a significant relationship between employment opportunities as a reason for study and degree enrolled. Males in Education gave this as a reason 91.67% of the time, followed by Commerce and Economics (77.08%), Law (66.66%) and Arts (49.25%). (Chi Square = 13.88, df = 3, p < .01.)

Females followed the same pattern though differences were less extreme. In Education, 65.12% gave employment as a reason for study, followed by Commerce and Economics (62.05%), Law (42.86%) and Arts (43.50%). (Chi Square = 7.87, df = 3, p < .05.)

When the variable employment opportunities was crosstabulated with sex for each degree taken separately, no significant relationships emerged between employment as a reason for study and sex. Thus it appears that studying to improve employment and career opportunities is degree-related rather than sex-related.

The reason **to improve employment and career opportunities** was also significantly cross tabulated with **age.** As people get older they give this reason less frequently. (Chi Square = 17.25, df = 3, p<.01)

Age years	%
25 or less	61.25
26-35	60.00
36-45	51.09
46 or more	27.27

This is perfectly reasonable given that younger people are more likely to be seeking to become established in or improve their careers.

Both males and females chose this reason for study less frequently as they gew older.

The reason **to gain a degree for personal satisfaction** was related to **degree enrolled** only. Law (30.78%) and Arts (28.68%) students gave this reason more frequently than Education (22.95%) or Commerce and Economics students (12.50%). (Chi Square = 7.47, df = 3, p < .05.)

Intellectual stimulation as a reason for study was significantly related to age, sex and degree enrolled. Students chose this reason for study more frequently as they grew older in contrast to improvement of employment and career opportunities. (Chi square = 13.05, df = 3, $p<.01$)

Age in years	%
25 or less	25
26-35	33.33
36-45	33.69
46 or more	56.82

Females also chose this reason more often than males (40.24% vs 24.09%). (Chi square = 9.47, df = 1, $p<.01$.)

We did a crosstabulation on stimulation by age for each sex taken separately. There was a significant relationship between intellectual stimulation as a reason for study and age for females but not for males. (Chi Square = 15.14, df = 3, $p < .01$.)

Females chose this reason more frequently as they grew older. Men showed the same trend however with the exception of the 46 or more years group.

Stimulation as a reason for study was also related to **degree enrolled.** Arts students chose this reason (43.03%) more often than Commerce & Economics (25.00%), Law (15.38%) and Education (13.11%) students. That this effect could be attributed to sex differences in degree enrolled seemed unlikely in view of the distribution of males and females over the various degrees.

4.2.2 Choice of subject area

(Question 2.2)

This question was related specifically to reasons for choice of subject area rather than reasons for undertaking a course of external study. It clearly overlaps with the previous question in those cases where a course of study is synonymous with the degree, but not in cases where there is choice within a particular degree framework.

The reasons presented were chosen with the frequencies shown below. (Some students indicated more than one reason.)

Assessment considerations	1.3%
Compatible with past study	15.9%
Compatible with work experience	22.2%
Compatible with abilities	19.9%
Only area of interest available externally	13.1%
Retraining for a different career	9.3%
To open up a new area of interest	21.7%
Recommendation of a friend	1.0%
Other reasons	6.8%

Other reasons given were to extend an existing interest and that the area of study was set by the degree.

We then asked whether the major reasons for study (compatible with past study, compatible with work experience, compatible with abilities, only area of interest available, retraining, to open up a new area of interest) were related to student characteristics. **Compatibility with past study** as a reason was not significantly related to any of these variables.

Compatibility with work experience was signficantly related to **sex and degree enrolled.** Males chose this reason more often than females (28.47% vs 18.29%). (Chi Square = 4.74, df = 1, $p<.05$.)

Education students chose this reason (55.74%) significantly more often than Commerce & Economics (37.50%) Arts (11.95%) and Law (0%) students. (Chi Square 66.43, df = 3, $p<.01$.)

Compatibility with abilities as a reason for study was also significantly related to **sex and degree enrolled.** Females chose this reason more often than males (25.61% vs 10.22%). (Chi Square = 12.04, df = 1, $p<.01$.)

Arts students chose this reason more often (27.49%) than Law (7.69%). Commerce & Economics (6.25%) and Education (3.28%). (Chi Square = 28.70, df = 3, $p<.01$.)

This reason was unrelated to sex in degrees taken separately.

Only area of interest as a reason was unrelated to any of the student characteristics.

Retraining for a different career was related to **sex and degree enrolled.**

Males chose this reason more often than females (15.33% vs 6.09%). (Chi Square = 7.75, df = 1, $p<.01$.)

Commerce & Economics students (21.88%) chose this reason more often than Law (18.18%) Arts (6.77%) and Education (3.39%). (Chi Square = 17.56, df = 3, $p<.01$.)

Retraining as a reason was unrelated to sex in the faculties taken separately.

To open up a new area of interest was related to **age and degree enrolled.** Students aged 46 years or more chose this as a reason (36.36%) more than 26-35 years (22.77%), 36-45 years (18.48%) or 25 years or less (15.00%). (Chi Square 8.36, df = 3, $p<.05$.) This reason was unrelated to age in the faculties taken separately.

4.2.3 Summary

In all, degree enrolled was the major student characteristic variable associated with reasons for study at university level. The reasons given for enrolment were not related to sex differences in the degrees taken separately.

As people get older they are less inclined to study to improve career and employment opportunities and more inclined to study for intellectual stimulation. This seems to apply more to females than males but both sexes follow the same trend.

Studying because of compatibility with work experience is also related to degree enrolled rather than sex when degrees are examined separately. The same applies to a desire to study because of compatibility with abilities and to retraining to open up a different career. What is emerging then is a different pattern of motivation according to the chosen degree which overrides sex differences. Age effects emerge in the context of considering whether a degree would help to improve career opportunities versus a desire for intellectual stimulation.

Mode of Study

Questionnaire items

3.1 Have you ever been enrolled as an on-campus student?

yes, at University of Queensland
yes, at another institution
no

3.2 On balance, do you think you would prefer to study on campus if you could?

Yes, full-time
Yes, part-time
Yes, for some subjects
No, not at all

4.3 Mode of study

4.3.1 Experienced

(Question 3.1)

Students were asked whether they had ever been enrolled as an on campus student at the University of Queensland or elsewhere. Of all respondents, 37.3% had been enrolled on campus at the University of Queensland, 36.8% had been enrolled on campus at another institution and 30.00% had never been an on-campus student. Some students had been enrolled at more

than one institution as an on-campus student - at the University of Queensland and elsewhere. Thus 70% of the respondents had had the experience of on-campus study.

We then looked at previous mode of study in relation to the student characteristics. **Previous experience at University of Queensland** was significantly related to **degree enrolled only.** Law students were more likely to have been on campus at University of Queensland (61.54%) than Arts (39.84%), Commerce & Economics (34.37%) or Education (24.59%) students. (Chi Square = 8.41, df = 3, $p<.05$.)

Previous experience at another institution was also significantly related to **degree enrolled.** Education students (59.02%) were more likely to have studied on campus at another institution, followed by Commerce & Economics (48.44%), Arts (29.88%) and Law (23.08%) students. (Chi Square = 22.73, df = 3, $p<.01$.)

Never having studied on campus was significantly related to **age.** The older students were, the less likely they were to have studied on campus.

Thus 47.72% of the 46 or more years group had not studied on campus, followed by 36.97% of 36-45 years, 26.11% of 26-35 years and 21.25% of 25 years or less age group. (Chi Square = 12.90, df = 3, $p<.01$.)

Never having studied on campus was significantly related to **GPA.** Students of very high and very low achievement in terms of GPA were more likely to have studied on campus than those in the middle ranges. Thus 20.24% of GPA6+ and 21.82% of GPA below 4 said they had never studied on campus compared with 37.7% of GPA 4 and 31.53% of GPA 5. (Chi Square = 9.77, df = 3, $p<.05$.)

4.3.2 Preferred

(Question 3.2)

When asked about their preferences for mode of study 38.8% of respondents said they would prefer full-time study, 19.6% part time, 25.2% some subjects on campus and only 17.4% said they would prefer not to study on campus. **A preference for full-time study** was related to **sex:** 48.90% of males and 33.33% of females expressed this preference. (Chi Square = 8.33, df = 1, $p<.01$.)

A preference for part-time study was related to **degree enrolled.** Thus 24.59% of Education students expressed this preference followed by 22.7% of Arts, 15.38% of Law and only 4.68% of Commerce & Economics students. (Chi Square = 11.59, df = 3, $p<.01$.)

A preference for some subjects on campus was related to **sex and years of study:** 29.27% of females and 17.52% of males expressed this preference. (Chi Square = 5.86, df = 1, $p<.05$)

Students who had been studying externally for 5-6 years were more likely to prefer some subjects on campus (39.22%) compared to 3-4 years (26.96%), 1-2 years 23.86% and 7 or more years (14.00%). (Chi Square = 8.91, df = 3, $p<.05$.)

When a preference for some subjects on campus was crosstabulated with sex for years of external study taken separately it was significantly related to sex only in the 1-2 years group

where 29.09% of females expressed this preference compared to 11.48% of males. (Chi Square = 5.95, df = 1, p<.05.)

When a preference to study some subjects on campus was crosstabulated with years of study for each sex taken separately, there was a significant relationship between this variable and years of study for males only who reflected the overall trend of students in years 5 and 6 of external study to prefer some subjects on campus (50.00%) compared to years 3 and 4 (17.07%), 7+ years (12.50%) and years 1 and 2 (11.48%). (Chi Square = 13.26, df = 3, p < .01.)

A preference not to study on campus at all was unrelated to any of the student characteristics.

4.3.3 Summary

A high 70% of respondents had had some experience with on-campus study. Law students were most likely to have studied on-campus at the University of Queensland while Education students were most likely to have studied on-campus at another institution. Younger students were more likely to have studied on-campus than older students. Only 17.7% of respondents said they would prefer not to study on campus at all. The rest preferred either full-time or part-time study or a mixture of some on-campus and some off-campus study. More males preferred full-time study than females and more females expressed a preference for mixed mode study. Most students who preferred part-time study were Education students.

Subject Workloads

Questionnaire items

1.4 What subjects were you enrolled in for 1983? Give subject codes only. Please indicate whether the workload for these subjects seemed to you to match their credit point value.

	Workload		
Subject Codes	Too little	About right	Too much

4.4 Subject Workloads

(Question 1.4)

Students responded to the question about workloads for up to six subjects studied during the year. The total number of subject enrolments of the 397 students was 952. The mean number of responses in each of the three categories: too little, about right, too much is shown below.

	Mean	%
too little	1.50	0.94%
about right	128.17	80.78
too much	29.00	18.28
Total	158.67	100.00

Clearly most students thought that the workload imposed by their subjects was appropriate though some students found it too heavy in some subjects.

Use of Introductory Materials

Questionnaire Items

4.1 External Studies Handbook

(a) Which sections of the Handbook do you think it is important for continuing students to receive every year?

How to enrol
Planning a degree program
Subject details and index
How we teach
Administrative procedures
A list of subjects available each year would suffice

(b) Did you have problems obtaining a copy of the 1983 Handbook when you needed it?

yes
no (please comment)

4.2 *University and You* Did you refer to this booklet for information during the year?

yes
no
don't remember this booklet

4.3 *How to Study*

(a) Did you read this booklet?

yes
no
don't remember this booklet

(b) If you read *How to Study*, did it help you to orient yourself to study at University?

yes
no (please comment)

(c) What kind of advice on university study do you think you really need?

4.4 *Thatcher Library Pamphlet*

(a) Did you read this information?

yes
no
don't remember this pamphlet

(b) If yes, did it encourage you to use the Thatcher Library?

yes
no
no need to use Thatcher

4.5 Use of introductory materials

This section of the survey concerned the use and availability of introductory materials provided for external students by the School of External Studies and Continuing Education.

4.5.1 External Studies Handbook

(Question 4.1a)

The External Studies Handbook describes all the courses offered externally by the University and gives names of lecturers, subject details, number of credit points for each course, methods of assessment and set texts. It also contains information on the external studies support network, eligibility rules, student and staff rights and responsibilities, sources of advice and help, teaching methods, administrative procedures and degree planning.

Students were asked to indicate which sections of the Handbook they thought it was important to receive every year. Students were free to respond to more than one category.

Handbook Section	% yes
How to Enrol	32.0
Planning a Degree Program	62.5
Subject Details	86.6
How we teach	22.7
Administrative Procedures	38.5
A list of subjects only	11.6

Specific details on subjects and advice on degree planning were clearly the most significant features of the Handbook from the students' point of view.

Each of the categories of response was crosstabulated with student characteristics. A preference for How to Enrol, Planning a Degree Program and Administrative Details were not significantly related to any student characteristics.

A preference for Subject Details was significantly related to age.

Students in the 46 or more age group answered yes to this (70.45%) less frequently than those in the other age group: 25 or less (88.75%), 26-35 (88.88%), 36-45 (88.17%). (Chi Square = 11.25, df = 3, $p<.05$.)

A preference for How We Teach was related to **Degree enrolled,** being required by Education students (34.43%), followed by Law (30.77%), Arts (22.70%) and Commerce & Economics (7.81%). (Chi Square = 13.46, df = 3, $p<.01$.)

Older students, 46 years or more (27.27%) said a subject list would suffice more often than other groups: 25 or less (10%), 26-35 (11.11%), 36-45 (6.45%). For some reason they appeared less concerned with subject details at the point of enrolling than younger counterparts. (Chi Square = 13.20, df = 3, $p<.01$.)

External Studies Handbook

(Question 4.1b)

The next question concerned the availability of the Handbook when it was needed. A high 38.2% of students said they had problems obtaining a copy of the Handbook when they needed it. Availability of the Handbook was significantly related to the region in which students resided. However it was not the case (as one might expect) that more remote students were negatively affected compared to students who resided closer to the St Lucia campus. (Chi Square= 21.78, df=6, $p<.01$.)

Region	% who had problems with Handbook availability
NSW & Victoria	14.29
Brisbane	30.86
Gold Coast & Sunshine Coast	50.49
Ipswich & Toowoomba	33.33
Western Queensland	53.85
Rockhampton & Mackay	40.00
Townsville & Cairns	52.78

Table 4.5 Percentage of students who had problems with Handbook availability by region.

This result appears to pinpoint the Gold and Sunshine Coasts, Western Queensland and Townsville and Cairns as problem areas at least in 1983 though clearly students in all regions experienced problems obtaining a copy of the Handbook when they needed it.

4.5.2 Information booklet: University and You

(Question 4.2)

This booklet provides practical information on the University, its facilities and organisation. It explains who the external student should contact with problems and queries and describes services offered by the University to improve channels of communication. Examination centres and academic and library staff are listed together with important dates in the University year and a number of useful texts to aid study.

Students were asked whether they referred to an Information Booklet entitled *University and You* during the year. Fifty seven point seven percent said they did, 30.6% that they did not and 11.6% said that they did not remember this booklet.

Responses to this question were unrelated to any of the student characteristics studied.

4.5.3 How to Study booklet

(Question 4.3a)

This booklet was written largely by the Director of the University's Counselling Services. It aims to prepare the external student for the kinds of problems that he or she might encounter when approaching independent study, and suggests a number of solutions. Illustrated with cartoons, it deals with such topics as how to organise study time, handle discouragement, strengthen motivation and approach examinations. Academic terms found in essay questions are explained and advice offered on how to approach study reading. The importance of personal contact with other students is emphasised.

Students were asked whether they had read a booklet called *How to Study* which was sent to them by the School: 66.7% said that they had read it, 25.0% that they had not and 8.3% that they did not remember it.

Responses to the question on the **How to Study booklet** were related to **sex, degree enrolled and years of external study.** Females were more likely to have read it than males (72.35% vs 55.47%). (Chi Square = 11.29, df = 2, p<.01.)

Education students were more likely to have read it (78.69%) compared to Arts (66.53%), Commerce & Economics (58.73%) and Law (30.77%) students. (Chi Square = 22.37, df = 6, p<.05.)

Students in the early years of external study were more likely to have read it than those in later years. (Chi Square = 17.57, df = 6, p<.01.)

Years of external study	%
1-2	74.43
3-4	61.74
5-6	56.00
7+	58.00

Responses to this question were crosstabulated with years of study for the sexes taken separately. Results were a significant relationship between having the read the booklet and years of study for females but not for males. (Chi Square = 17.76, df =6, p < .01.)

Females were inclined to have read the booklet more in the first 1 to 2 years of study (82.73%) than in subsequent years.

How to Study booklet

(Question 4.3b)

Those students who had read this booklet were asked whether it helped them to orient themselves to external study: 71.3% said that it had helped them. This variable was unrelated to any student characteristics.

Reasons why the booklet was not useful given by students were:

Too simple
Contained nothing new
Impractical
Habits had already formed
More advice was needed on assignments
It did not relate specifically to external students

How to Study booklet

(Question 4.3c)

When asked what kind of advice on university study they really needed, responses included:

More advice on personal development (8.3%)
More information about external study (46.1%),
More information on study skills (33.1%)
No advice necessary (11.0%)
More on assignments (0.4%)
More on pacing study (1.2%)

Clearly the information on skills of studying externally and about external study as a mode of study were of central interest to students.

4.5.4 Thatcher Library pamphlet

(Question 4.4a)

Students were then asked whether they had read the pamphlet put out by Thatcher Library: 87.4% said that they had, 8.6% that they had not and 4.0% did not remember it.
Responses to this question on the **Thatcher Library pamphlet** were related to **age:** 96.77% of 36-45 years group and 90.90% of 46 or more group said they had read it compared to 84.91% of 26-35 group and 80% of 25 or less group. (Chi Square = 23.20, df = 6, $p<.01$.)

Thatcher Library pamphlet

(Question 4.4b)

When asked whether the pamphlet encouraged them to use Thatcher library 66.57% of those who had read it said that it did, 14.83% said that it did not and 18.60% said they had no need to use Thatcher Library. This variable was significantly related to **sex and degree enrolled.** Females were more encouraged to use Thatcher Library after reading the pamphlet than males (86.41% versus 70.45%). (Chi Square = 8.93, df = 1, $p < .05$.)

Education (86.00%) and Arts (85.1%) students were more likely to use the Library after reading the pamphlet than Law (75.00%) and Commerce and Economics (61.11%). (Chi Square = 12.62, df = 3, $p < .01$.)

This pattern of results could however be related to sex differences in degree enrolled.

4.5.5 Summary

The Subject Details included in the Handbook are an important source of information for students as is the section on Planning a Degree Program.

A very high percentage of students overall had trouble obtaining a copy of the Handbook when they needed it in 1983 and students in some regions were more adversely affected than others. Distance from the University campus per se did not appear to be a key factor in

determining availability of the Handbook.

The *Information* booklet and *How To Study* booklet were read by more than half of the respondents but clearly there is room for improvement in the *How to Study* booklet with students requesting more information about the external mode of study and about study skills.

The Thatcher Library pamphlet was read by a high percentage of students and did have some effect in encouraging students to use the service.

The use and effectiveness of Introductory Materials can be summarised as follows:

Publication	% read	% read with positive effect
University and You	57.7	n.a.
How to Study	66.7	71.3
Thatcher Library Pamphlet	87.4	66.57

Newsletters

Questionnaire Items

5. Each year three different kinds of newsletters are mailed to you. Please indicate whether you would like to go on receiving these:

	Yes	No	Don't mind either way
(a) External Studies News			
(b) Eslo's Newsletter			
(c) University News			

4.6 Newsletters

(Question 5)

Students were asked whether they would like to go on receiving the three different kinds of Newsletters which are mailed to them each year. Responses are summarised below.

	% Yes	% No	% Don't mind
External Studies News	63.0	8.9	28.1
ESLO News	54.5	12.6	32.9
University News	55.6	11.4	33.1

No variables were related to whether or not people wanted to go on receiving these, apart from the **preference for University News** which was related to **age.** Older students were more likely to want to continue receiving this Newsletter - 69.77% of those aged 46 or more, 67.03% of the 36-45 age group, followed by 48.28% of those between 26 and 35, and 50.63% of those below 25. (Chi Square = 13.85, df = 6, $p<.05$.)

Course Materials

Questionnaire Items

6.1 *Course Guide/Course Outline/Introductory Outline.*

(a) Did you receive a Course Guide for each of the subjects in which you were enrolled this year?

yes
no (please comment)

(b) In general did your *Course Guides* set out clear guidelines on how the course would be organised and assessed?

yes
no (please comment)

(c) In general did the *Course Guides* arrive in time to be useful to you?

yes
no (please comment)

6.2 *Lecture Notes/Study Guides*

(a) How would you prefer your lecture notes/study guides to be mailed to you?

All booklets at beginning of semester
Two mailings per semester
At three or four weekly intervals
Other (please comment)

(b) Did the Lecture Notes/Study Guides always arrive in time to be useful to you?

yes
no (please specify)

(c) In what form would you like to receive your Lecture Notes/Study Guides?

Stapled in volumes
Loose leaf format
Other (please comment)

(d) How do you use your Lecture Notes/Study Guides?

just for reading and notetaking
as workbooks (written on, underlined etc.)
other (please comment)

6.3 Readers/Reprints

(a) Did any of your subjects have Readers or Reprints as part of the Course Material?

yes
no

(b) If yes, were these materials always legible?

yes
no

(c) If yes, was the amount of material in the Readers:

too much
about right
too little

6.4 Set Texts

Did you have any problems obtaining set texts?

no
yes (please comment)

6.5 Audiotapes

(a) Did any of the subjects in which you enrolled this year include audiotapes mailed to you as part of the Course Materials.

yes

no

(b) If yes, was the listening quality of the audiotapes always adequate for your purposes?

yes
no (please comment)

(c) Would you prefer to:

pay no deposit and return all audiotapes to the Division
at the end of each semester
pay a deposit which would be refunded if tapes were returned

4.7 Course Materials

4.7.1 Course Guides

(Question 6.1a)

Students were asked whether they received a Course Guide for each of the subjects they were enrolled in during the year: 98.5% said that they did but a few students cited specific subjects for which there was no course guide.

Course Guides

(Question 6.1b)

When asked whether the Course Guides set out a clear indication on how the course would be organised and assessed 90.6% of students said that they did. Those who said the guides were not clear complained of poor indexing, that they were too brief, vague, contained incorrect information, were poorly organised. This variable was unrelated to any of the student characteristics.

Course Guides

(Question 6.1c)

Asked about whether course guides arrived in time to be useful, 94.4% of students said that they did. This variable was unrelated to any of the student characteristics studied.

4.7.2 Lecture Notes and Study Guides

(Question 6.2a)

When asked at what times they would prefer to receive lecture materials, most students preferred the start of semester (58.1%) though 31.1% said 3-4 weekly intervals would be preferable and 10.6% said two mails per semester. A small number said they did not mind or it depended on the amount of material involved (0.3%). This variable was unrelated to any of

the student characteristics studied.

Lecture notes and Study Guides

(Question 6.2b)

When it came to arrival of Lecture Notes and Study Guides in time to be useful 68.1% said they did arrive in time but a high percentage were not happy with arrival times. Of this group 42.86% said the lecture notes arrived too late for them to complete their assignments and 43.65% said notes were late in some courses. The arrival of lecture notes was unrelated to any of the student characteristics studied.

Lecture Notes and Study Guides

(Question 6.2c)

When asked in what form they would prefer to receive lecture notes and study guides 76.2% said they would prefer stapled volumes, 20.3% loose leaf and 3.5% gave other alternatives such as "ready for a binder", "as a complete unit", "in separate topics" or "don't care".

The form preferred was related to degree enrolled and years of study.

Commerce & Economics students were fairly equally divided in a preference for stapled vs loose leaf materials (52.38% vs 46.03%) while students in all other degrees preferred stapled materials. (Chi Square = 32.29, df = 6, $p<.01$.)
Arts (80.4% vs 16.0%)
Law (76.92% vs 23.07%)
Education (83.60% vs 11.48%)
A rather higher percentage of students who had been studying for 7 or more years preferred loose leaf materials compared with students in other years, otherwise stapled volumes were preferred more often by all years of study. (Chi Square = 14.54, df = 6, $p<.05$)

Years of Study	% Stapled	% Loose leaf
1 and 2	81.14	5.42
3 & 4	76.52	21.74
5 & 6	74.00	10.00
7+	60.00	40.00

Lecture Notes and Study Guides

(Question 6.2d)

The next question concerned the way in which lecture materials were used by students. Twenty seven point seven percent said that they used them just for reading and notetaking while a high 79.1% said that they used them as workbooks. Obviously some students used them in both ways. Other uses (3.3%) included using materials to provide summaries to give added information and to show what the lecturer thought about the topic.

35

Use of lecture notes as workbooks was significantly related to **sex.** : 83.00% of females compared to 72.26% of males used them in this way. (Chi Square = 5.52, df = 1, p<.05.)

4.7.3 Course Readers

(Question 6.3a)

Students were asked whether they received Course Readers as part of their course material: 66.6% said that they did. **Whether or not they said they received Readers** was signficantly related to **sex, age and degree enrolled.**

Males said they received readers signficantly more often than females (74.07% vs 62.50%) (Chi Square = 4.70, df = 1, p<.05)

Students 30-45 years said they received Readers (77.17%) more often than 26-35 years (69.49%), 25 or less (55.13%) and 46 or more (53.66%) age groups. (Chi Square = 13.02, df = 3, p<.01.)

Education students received readers 85% of the time compared to Law (75%), Commerce and Economics (73.01%) and Arts (60.81%). (Chi Square 14.30, df = 3, p<.01)

Course Readers

(Question 6.3b)

If students received readers they were asked whether they were always legible: 62.1% replied that they were and the variable was unrelated to student characteristics.

Course Readers

(Question 6.3c)

Furthermore those students who received Readers were asked about the volume of material in the Readers: 28.18% of these students said that Readers contained too much material, 62.55% that it was about right and 5.01% that there was too little material. This variable was significantly related to **degree enrolled.** A high percentage of Education students complained about too much material (40.81%) while 22.22% of Law students complained of too little. (Chi Square = 17.20, df = 3, p<.01)

4.7.4 Set Texts

(Question 6.4)

Students were asked whether they had any problems obtaining set texts: 77.95% said they had no problems. Those who did have problems complained that they were out of print, not in the University bookshop, too costly, available only at the University, or that they had experienced delays in obtaining the texts. This variable was significantly related to region where the students lived. Fewest problems were experienced by students living in Brisbane: only 9.88%

had problems. Students in NSW/Victoria and Western Queensland had most problems: 28.57% and 30.77%. Surprisingly though students in Ipswich and Toowoomba claimed they had problems: 27.12% and 27.12% said they had problems, as did those in the Gold and Sunshine Coasts (23.53%). These were of a similar order to students in Rockhampton and Mackay (19.35%) and Townsville and Cairns (22.23%) who also had problems obtaining set texts when they needed them. (Chi Square = 40.61, df = 18, $p<.01$)

4.7.5 Audiotapes

(Question 6.5a)

Thirty six point five percent of students said they were enrolled in subjects which included audiotapes in the course materials. This variable was related to degree enrolled: 41.36% Arts students received audiotapes compared to 32.81% of Commerce & Economics, 27.86% of Education and 7.69% of Law. (Chi Square = 9.51, df = 3, $p<.05$)

Audiotapes

(Question 6.5b)

If they received tapes students were asked whether the quality was always adequate for their purposes: 83.33% of these students said that it was. This variable was unrelated to any of the student characteristics.

Audiotapes

(Question 6.5c)

When asked about the preferred method of receiving and returning tapes, 80.6% of students said they would prefer to pay no deposit and return tapes at the end of semester, as is the case at the moment, 19.4% said they would prefer to pay a deposit and retain the tapes. This variable was not signigicantly related to any of the student characteristics studied.

4.7.6 Summary

A high percentage of students received Course Guides and were satisfied with them both in terms of their content and arrival times. The same could not be said for arrival of Lecture Notes and Study Guides. Less than seventy percent of students said they received these materials in time to be useful to them. A particular problem area was that materials arrived arrived too late for completion of assignments.

Students were divided about the best mailing schedule for course materials: all at start of semester, at 3-4 weekly intervals, two mails per semester though most opted for the first alternative.

A high percentage of students preferred to receive their course materials in stapled volumed but Commerce and Economics students showed an equal preference for loose leaf materials as did students in later years of study.

Almost 80% of respondents said they used their course materials as workbooks rather than just for reading and notetaking even though in general the books are not specifically designed for that purpose.

Students in some regions had problems obtaining copies of set texts when they needed them, principally in NSW and Victoria and Western Queensland but problems did persist in all regions except Brisbane.

Audiotapes appear to have been prepared for courses for about one third of respondents and there was a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of the audiotapes on the part of those who received them.

In all, this Section points to the need for lecturers to give more attention to the scheduling of assignments in relation to mailing schedules and perhaps for modification of the schedules to accommodate assignment needs. Perhaps too, the format of Lecture Notes and Study Guides needs to be reviewed in order to accommodate the way in which students actually use these materials: as workbooks rather than just for reading and notetaking.

Video and Audio cassette recorders - Ownership.

Questionnaire items

6.6 Videotapes

(a) Do you currently own (or lease) a video recorder?

yes
no

(b) If you have a video recorder what format does it accept?

VHS
Beta
other (please specify)

(c) If not, do you plan to obtain a video recorder over the next three years?

yes
no
yes, if university subjects included videotapes

(d) If not, could you arrange regular access to one if you needed it for study purposes?

yes
no

(e) Do you currently own an audio cassette recorder?

yes
no

4.8 Video and audio cassette recorders - Ownership

(Question 6.6a)

Students were asked whether they currently owned or leased a video recorder: 22.9% replied that they did. Video recorder ownership was significantly related to number of years enrolled externally with ownership being most prelevant in the 3-4 years group. (Chi Square = 10.49, df = 3, $p<.05$)

Years enrolled	Video Ownership
1 & 2	17.14%
3 & 4	32.46%
5 & 6	25.49%
7 or more	16.66%

Video and cassette recorders - ownership

(Question 6.6b)

Of those students who owned videotapes most had a VHS format (82.22%) while 18.88% had Betamax.

Video and cassette recorders - ownership

(Question 6.6c)

Asked whether they planned to obtain a video recorder over the next three years if they did not have one already 24.57% said yes, 63.14% said no, and 12.29% said they would if University subjects included videotapes. **Plans to purchase a video recorder** were significantly related to **age.** Students in the 36-45 year age group were more likely to say they planned to purchase a video recorder (30.43%) compared to 26-35 (25%), 25 or less (23.73%) or 46 or more (13.51%). (Chi Square = 14.34, df = 6, $p<.05$)

Video and cassette recorders - ownership

(Question 6.6d)

Students who did not currently own a video recorder, were asked whether they could arrange for regular access to one if needed for study purposes: 54.25% of these students said that regular access was possible. This variable was significantly related to age: 64.22% of 26-35 years group said they could arrange regular access compared to 58% of 25 years or less, 48.14% of 36-45 years and 26.47% of 46 years or more. (Chi Square = 16.03, df = 3, $p<.01$.)

Video and cassette recorders - Ownership

(Question 6.6e)

Students were asked whether they currently owned an audio cassette recorder: 92.3% replied that they did. This variable was significantly related to sex: 97.01% of males owned a cassette recorder compared to 89.71% of females. (Chi Square = 5.50, df = 1, $p<.05$)

4.8.1 Summary

Penetration of video recorders into the home market among the respondents was quite low. Of those who owned them most had VHS format. About a quarter of students who did not own video recorders planned to purchase one in the next three years, particularly those in the 36 to 45 year age group. About half the students who did not own a video recorder said they could arrange access if needed for study purposes. As was expected there was a high degree of ownership of audio cassette recorders among respondents.

Personal computers - Ownership

Questionnaire Items

6.7 (a) Do you currently own (or lease) a personal computer?

yes
no

(b) What type of computer is it?

(c) If not, do you plan to obtain a personal computer over the next three years?

yes
no
yes, if subjects included computer components e.g. assignments

(d) If not, could you arrange regular access to a computer if you needed it for study purposes?

yes
no

4.9 Personal computers - Ownership

(Question 6.7a)

Students were then asked whether they currently owned or leased a personal computer. 13.3% replied that they did. Computer ownership was signficantly related to age: 21.50% of the 36-45 year group owned a computer compared to 13.64% of 26-35, 11.63% of 46 or more, 3.80% of 25 or less. (Chi Square = 11.74, df = 3, $p<.01$)

Personal computers- Ownership

(Question 6.7b)

Twenty different types of personal computers were listed by those who owned them ranging from very limited to fairly sophisticated devices. The largest percentage owned was the Apple followed by Commodore 64, Vic 20 and Dick Smith 80.

Personal computers - Ownership

(Question 6.7c)

Those students who did not own a personal computer were asked if they planned to obtain one over the next three years: 18.86% said that they planned to obtain one, 74.38% that they did not and 9.26% that they would if required for study purposes. Plans to purchase a personal computer were significantly related to sex: 25.45% of males said they planned to obtain a computer compared to 15.64% of females. A further 11.82% of males said they would obtain a computer if required for study purposes compared to 8.06% of females.

Personal computers - Ownership

(Question 6.7d)

Those students who did not own a personal computer were asked if they could arrange access to one if needed for study purposes: 48.46% said that they could do so. Access was signficantly related to sex, and GPA: 60.87% of males compared to 43.39% of females said they could arrange access. (Chi Square = 6.88, df = 1, $p<.01$)

In general more students with lower GPA scores said that they could arrange access: 64.29% of students with GPA less than 4 said they could arrange access, 51.85% of students GPA 4, 40.50% GPA 5, 42.19% GPA 6 and above. (Chi Square = 7.72, df = 3, $p<.05$.)

4.9.1 Summary

Ownership of personal computers was quite low and concentrated in the 36 to 45 years age group. Twenty different types of personal computers were listed by owners. About one fifth of students who did not own a personal computer said they planned to purchase one over the next three years with males being more likely to respond positively to this question than females. About half non-owners said they could obtain access to a personal computer if required for study purposes. Once again males responded more positively to this question than females.

Regional contact

Questionnaire items

7.1 Officer-in-Charge

(a) Did you have any contact (face-to-face, telephone, letter) with an Officer-in-Charge this year?

Not applicable, no access to Officer-in-Charge
Frequently
Infrequently
Not at all

(b) If you had any contact, what kind of advice did you seek from the Officer-in-Charge?

administrative
degree planning
examination arrangements
other (please comment)

(c) If you had any contact, was that contact helpful?

yes
no

7.2 Ringrose Librarians

(a) Did you have any contact (face-to-face, telephone, letter) with a Ringrose Librarian this year?

Not applicable, no Ringrose Librarian
Frequently
Infrequently
Not at all

(b) What kind of advice did you seek from the Ringrose Librarian?

Library related
Subject related e.g. Reading lists
Course planning
Examination arrangements
Enrolment details
Other (please comment)

(c) Was that contact helpful?

not applicable, no contact
yes
no

7.3 Study Centres

(a) Did you go to a local study centre this year?

not applicable, no local centre
frequently
infrequently
no need to go to centre

(b) If you went to a centre, what were your **main** reasons for visiting your study centre?

tutorial meeting
study group meeting
to borrow library books
to request information
informal meeting with another student
a quiet place to study/read/write
other (please comment)

7.4 Tutorial Groups

(a) Were you a member of any tutorial groups this year?

yes, frequently
yes, infrequently
no, no tutorials available in my subject(s)
no, prefer not to attend tutorials
no, distance/other circumstances prevent tutorial attendance

(b) If you have ever been a member of a tutorial group in the course of your external studies at University of Queensland what is your opinion of the value of regional tutorials for external students?

an aid to study
not useful (please comment)

7.5 Study groups/self help groups

(a) Were you a member of a study group this year?

yes
no, no study groups available in my subject(s)
no, prefer not to go to study groups
no, distance/other circumstances prevent attendance at study groups

(b) If you have ever been a member of a study group in the course of your external studies at University of Queensland, was this experience:

an aid to study

not useful
no opinion

7.6 Individual Student Contact

(a) Did you contact other external students in your region for academic reasons this year?

frequently
infrequently
not at all
not applicable, no other students in region doing same subject(s)

(b) If you had contact was it:

an aid to study
not useful

7.7 Area Communicators

(a) Did you have contact with an area communicator this year?

frequently
infrequently
not at all
not applicable, no area communicator

(b) Was this contact:

an aid to study
not useful
not applicable, no contact

4.10 Regional contact

4.10.1 Officers-in-charge

(Question 7.1a)

Officers-in-charge co-ordinate activities in regional centres and are attached to the University on a part-time basis. They are responsible for organising tutorial groups, overseeing the activities of centres, graduation dinners, visits by academic staff, participation in careers days and responding to student queries.

Students were asked whether they had any contact with their officer-in-charge during the year: 18.6% had no officer-in-charge to contact, 4.6% said they made frequent contact and 29.9% infrequent contact while 46.9% made no contact even though an officer-in-charge was available in their area.

Contact with the officer-in-charge was significantly related to the **area in which students lived.** In general, more remote students were more likely to have made contact (either frequently or infrequently) than those living close to Brisbane (excluding students in NSW and Victoria).

Region	% contact
Western Queensland	77.78
Rockhampton/Mackay	67.86
Townsville/Cairns	59.38
Gold & Sunshine Coasts	41.30
Ipswich/Toowoomba	40.38
Brisbane	29.51
NSW/Victoria	29.41

Table 4.6 Percent of students who made contact with an officer-in-charge by region

Officers-in-charge

(Question 7.1b)

We then looked at the kind of advice sought from officers-in-charge by those students who had contact: 56.39% asked for help with examination arrangements, 42.86% sought administrative advice, 11.28% asked for advice on degree planning, 12.08% sought other advice such as access to photocopying, problems with individual subjects, names of students in the area, tutorial arrangements, help with completing this survey!

Officers-in-charge

(Question 7.1c)

Of those students who had contact with an officer-in-charge, 92.91% said that the contact was helpful to them.

4.10.2 Ringrose Librarians

(Question 7.2a)

There are small library collections in the regional centres known as Ringrose Libraries. These are branches of the Thatcher Library. They contain a selection of basic books and journals, photocopied articles and audio-cassettes. These libraries are approximately 15-20 hours each week at times when students in the area are most likely to be able to access them. The are staffed by part-time librarians.

Students were asked whether they had any contact with a Ringrose Librarian during the year: 33.9% said they had no Ringrose Librarian in their area, 9.9% had frequent contact, 10.9% had infrequent contact, 45.6% had no contact even though there was a Ringrose Librarian in their area.

Ringrose Librarians

(Question 7.2b)

Of those students who had contact, 83.33% sought advice on library-related matters, 28.21% asked for advice on subject related matters, 5.13% on course planning, 1.3% on enrolment details and 1.3% on other matters.

Ringrose librarians

(Question 7.2c)

Of those students who made contact with Ringrose librarians 96.05% said that the contact was helpful.

4.10.3 Study Centres

(Question 7.3a)

The University of Queensland has established regional study centres in several Queensland towns and cities in order to facilitate the development of its teaching program and to co-ordinate tutorial and self-help groups. Centres generally have tutorial rooms, libraries and reading rooms. In some locations the centres are shared with other tertiary institutions. Loudspeaker telephones have been installed in most centres for telephone tutorials.

Tutorials are held in study centres and their frequency and duration depends on availability of funds and number of students enrolled in specific subjects in a given area. When tutorial groups cannot be formed, students are encouraged to form study groups for their mutual benefit.

Students were asked whether they went to a local study centre during the year: 40.8% had no access to a local centre, 16.1% visited frequently, 19.2% visited infrequently, 23.9% did not visit even though a centre was accessible.

Study centres

(Question 7.3b)

Of those students who visited study centres, 53.38% of visits were to attend a tutorial meeting, 10.53% to attend a study group meeting, 56.39% to borrow books, 12.03% to request information, 6.77% for informal meetings with other students, 5.26% for other reasons.

4.10.4 Tutorial Groups

(Question 7.4a)

Students were asked whether they were a member of any tutorial group during the year: 14.4% had frequent tutorials, 11.3% had infrequent tutorials, 36.3% said no tutorials were

available in their subjects, 4.8% said they would prefer not to attend tutorials, 31.7% said distance was a problem in attending tutorials.

Attendance at tutorials was significantly related to **sex.** Females said they had attended tutorials more often than males, 17.01% frequently and 14.52% infrequently for females vs 11.11% frequently and 5.98% infrequently for males. Males were more likely than females to claim that distance was a problem (40.0% vs 27.39%). (Chi Square = 13.06, df = 4, $p<.05$)

Tutorial groups

(Question 7.4b)

Those students who had been a member of a tutorial group at all in the course of their external studies were asked whether tutorials were an aid to study or not: 89.39% said that they were. Those who did not find tutorials useful gave a variety of reasons for their dissatisfaction: tutorials consisted of revision only, quality of tutors was variable, dissatisfaction with other students, tutorials were too unstructured, student participation was poor.

4.10.5 Study Groups

(Question 7.5a)

Students were asked whether they had been a member of a study group during the year: 8.2% said that they had, 51.9% said none were available in their subjects, 7.5% preferred not to attend study groups and 32.4% said distance or other circumstances prevented their attendance at study groups.

Attendance at study groups was significantly related to **sex and years of external study:** 11.07% of females vs 3.03% of males had attended study groups. Males were more likely than females to claim that distance or other circumstances prevented their attendance (40.15% vs 27.46%). (Chi Square = 11.83, df = 3, $p<.01$)

Students who had been studying externally for 5-6 years were more likely to have attended a study group (20% vs 9.36% 1-2 years, 4.0% 7 or more years, 3.5% 3-4 years). (Chi Square = 17.89, df = 9, $p<.05$)

Study groups

(Question 7.5b)

Those students who had been a member of a study group in the course of their external studies were asked whether this experience was an aid to study: 74.75% claimed that it was, 16.16% had no opinion and 9.09% said that it was not.

4.10.6 Individual Student Contact

(Question 7.6a)

Students were asked whether they had contacted other external students in their region for academic reasons during the year: 16.5% said they made frequent contact and 22.6% made infrequent contact, 45.0% made no contact at all and 15.8% had no other students in the

region doing the same subjects.

Individual student contact was significantly related to **sex.** Females were more likely to make frequent or infrequent contact than males: 24.52% frequent and 29.33% infrequent vs 11.82% frequent and 21.82% infrequent for males. (Chi Square = 12.81, df = 2, $p<.01$)

In general degree of individual contact (frequent and infrequent) increased with age. (Chi Square = 26.08, df = 6, $p<.01$)

Age	% Contact
25 years or less	33.33
26-35 years	47.94
36-45 years	50.00
46 or more years	60.53

Individual student contact

(Question 7.6b)

Students who had made contact with others were asked whether it was an aid to study: 88.31% claimed that it was.

4.10.7 Area Communicators

(Question 7.7a)

Area communicators are a network of students or ex-students who volunteer to act as friends and advisors to fellow external students. This is student-based communication network organised through the External Students Liaison Officer at the students union. There are a large number of area communicators dispersed throughout Queensland.

Students were asked whether they had any contact with an area communicator during the year: 2.6% said they had frequent contact, 6.5% infrequent contact and 63.6% had no contact while 27.4% of students had no area communicator in their region.

Area communicators

(Question 7.7b)

Of those who made contact, 60% said that it was an aid to study.

4.10.8 Summary

The picture that emerges from this Section is one of unequal access opportunities to the various regional support services offered by the School of External Studies and Continuing Education and lack of use by many students who do have access to these services. Those students who do use the services, however, express a high degree of satisfaction with them.

These results are summarised below:

Service	% contact (frequent and infrequent)	% satisfied
Officers-in-charge	34.50	92.91
Ringrose Librarians	20.80	96.05
Study Centres	35.3	-
Tutorial Groups	25.70	89.39
Study Groups	8.2	74.75
Individual student contact	39.10	88.31
Area Communicators	9.10	60.00

The other pattern that emerges is the greater likelihood of females to use regional services than males. This is shown in the table below. Significant differences are asterisked.

Service	% contact (Frequent and infrequent)	
	Females	Males
Officers-in-charge	35.98	30.88
Ringrose Librarians	23.21	15.67
Study Centres	37.56	30.37
Tutorial Groups	37.56	17.09*
Study Groups	11.07	3.03*
Individual Student Contact	53.85	33.64*
Area Communicators	12.71	12.22

Contact with St. Lucia Campus

Questionnaire items

8.1 Lecturer Contact

(a) Have you had contact (face-to-face, telephone, letter) with any of your lecturers this year?

Frequently
Infrequently
Not at all

(b) Was this contact:

an aid to study
not useful
not applicable, no contact

(c) If you didn't contact your lecturers was it because:

you didn't need to
you didn't like to trouble them
previous contact was unhelpful
you would rather solve problems on your own
you had other useful academic contacts
Other (please specify)

8.2 Contact with Administrative staff of the Division

(a) Did you contact the Administrative staff of the Division of External Studies this year?

frequently
infrequently
not at all

(b) Did you find this contact:

useful
not useful
not applicable, no contact

(c) If you didn't contact the administrative staff was it because:

you didn't need to
you didn't like to trouble them
previous contact was unhelpful
you would rather solve your problems on your own
you could solve your problems in other ways
other (please comment)

8.3 Contact with External Students Liaison Officer (ESLO)

(a) Did you have contact (face-to-face, telephone, letter) with the ESLO this year?

frequently
infrequently
not at all

(b) If you had contact, did you find it:

useful
not useful

8.4 Ansafone Service

(a) Did you use the Ansafone service in the Division this year?

yes
no

(b) If you **didn't** use this service was it because you:

weren't aware of it
had used it in the past without satisfactory results
didn't need it
would prefer not to talk to an answering machine

8.5 Telephone Tutorials

(a) Did you take part in telephone tutorials in any subject this year?

yes
no

(b) If you took part in telephone tutorials did you find them:

Useful aids to study
Not useful (please comment)

(c) If you took part in telephone tutorials this year were there any technical problems?

no
yes (please specify type of problem and where you were at the time)

(d) Would you like to take part in telephone tutorials in the future?

yes
yes, in some subjects
no, they do not appeal to me
don't know enough about them to comment

8.6 St. Lucia Study Schools

(a) Did you attend either of the two study schools held on the St. Lucia campus in May and September this year?

yes
no

(b) If you did attend a study school was it:

a useful aid to study
a waste of time

(c) If you did attend a study school was access to libraries adequate for your purposes?

yes
no (please comment)

(d) If you didn't attend a study school was it because:

You couldn't afford the time/money
You didn't want to attend
Other (please comment)

4.11 Contact with St. Lucia campus

4.11.1 Lecturers

(Question 8.1)

Students were asked whether they had had any contact with any of their lecturers during the year. Contact included face-to-face, telephone and mail. Eight point one percent said they had had frequent contact and 58.7% said they had had infrequent contact, while 33.2% had no contact at all.

Lecturer contact was significantly related to the **sex** of respondents: 58.82% of males made contact compared with 72.36% of females. (Chi Square = 9.40, df = 2, $p < .01$)

Lecturer contact was also significantly related to **age** with younger students making less contact. (Chi Square = 20.54, df = 6 $p < .01$)

Age	% contact
25 yrs or less	60.66
26-35 yrs	60.00
36-45 yrs	75.83
46 or more yrs	88.64

Lecturer contact was also significantly related to **GPA.** Students in the highest GPA range (6+) made contact 58.33% of the time, followed by GPA 4 (63.27% contact), GPA less than 4 (67.27% contact) and GPA 5 (77.98% contact). (Chi Square = 12.33, df = 6, $p < .05$)

Lecturer contact

(Question 8.1b)

When asked whether lecturer contact was an aid to study, 94.21% of students who had had contact said that it was. Students with higher GPA scores evaluated lecturer contact more highly than those with lower GPA's. GPA 6+ students said that lecturer contact was an aid

to study 100.00% of the time, GPA 5 95.24% of the time, GPA 4 93.40% and GPA 3 or less 86.11%. (Chi Square = 7.55, df = 3, p < .05)

4.11.2 Contact with administrative staff

(Question 8.2a)

Two point five percent of students made frequent contact with administrative staff of the division and 49.2% made infrequent contact, while 48.2% made no contact at all. **Contact with administrative staff** was significantly related to **degree enrolled.** Law students made most contact (69.23%) followed by Commerce and Economics (56.25%), Arts (55.60%) and Education (29.51%). (Chi Square = 17.56, df = 6, p < .05)

Administrative contact

(Question 8.2b)

Of those students who made contact with administrative staff, 93.66% found it useful.

Administrative contact

(Question 8.2c)

Those students who did not make contact said it was because they had no need to do so (90.11%). A small percentage responded to all other categories.

4.11.3 External Students Liaison Officer

The External Students Liaison Officer (ESLO) is employed by the Students Union to assist external students who have problems with certain aspects of their degree work. The ESLO acts primarily as an agent in dealings with the University's administration and represents external students on committees of the School of External Studies and Continuing Education.

External Students Liaison Officer

(Question 8.3a)

Eleven point four percent of students had contact with the External Students Liaison Officer, mostly infrequently, while 88.60% had no contact. **ESLO contact** was significantly related to **degree enrolled:** 95.31% of Commerce and Economics students had no contact followed by 93.44% of Education, 86.29% of Arts and 84.62% of Law. (Chi Square = 23.18, df = 6, P < .01)

External Students Liaison Officer

(Question 8.3b)

Those students who had contact were asked whether they found it useful or not: 95.56% said that it was useful contact.

4.11.4 Ansafone service

(Question 8.4a)

The School of External Studies and Continuing Education has an Ansafone machine installed to record callers' messages after hours. Messages are processed first thing the following morning and relayed to the appropriate person. The type of messages expected on the Ansafone service are those requiring immediate action, where time is of the essence.

Only 4.5% of students used the Ansafone service during the year.

Ansafone service

(Question8.4b)

Of those students who did not use the Ansafone service, 26.79% said they were not aware of its existence. A further 57.03% said they had no need for the service, 10.34% said they would prefer not to talk to an answering machine and 1.59% said they had used it in the past with unsatisfactory results.

Reasons given for not using the service were related to **age and GPA.** In general older students said they preferred not to use it, more often than younger students. Students aged 46 years or more preferred not to use it (13.16%) and 36 to 45 years (16.04%), compared with 26-35 years (9.09%) and 25 years or younger (7.79%).

Older groups were also likely to say they had no need of the service. Only 46.75% of the 25 years or more group gave this response compared with 61.21% of 26-35, 69.14% or 36-45 and 57.90% of 46 years or more.

Level of awareness in the 25 or less group was, however, lower than in older groups: 44.20% of this group said they were not aware of the service compared with 27.88% of 25-35 years, 12.35% of 36-45 years and 28.95% of 46 or more years. (Chi Square = 22.14, df = 9, $p < .01$.)

Awareness of the service increased with GPA, from 44.09% unaware at GPA less than 4, 30.15% unaware at GPA 4, 19.80% unaware at GPA 5 and 23.29% unaware at GPA 6 or more.

As GPA increased students were more likely to claim that they had no need of the service or that they preferred not to speak to an answering machine. (Chi Square = 20.46, df = 9, $p < .05$.)

Telephone tutorials

(Question 8.5a)

When asked whether they had taken part in telephone tutorials during the year only 3.3% of students said that they had done so.

Telephone tutorials

(Question 8.5b)

Most of those who participated, said the tutorials were a useful aid to study: 84.62%. Whether or not students took part in telephone tutorials was significantly related to sex: 4.90% of females took part compared to 0.73% of males. (Chi Square = 3.46, df = 1, $p < .05$.)

This variable was also related to region. Students in the Townsville/Cairns area were more likely to have taken part compared to all other regions which showed very low levels of participation. (Chi Square = 33.00, df = 6, $p < .05$.)

Telephone tutorials

(Question 8.5c)

Asked about whether there were any technical problems with telephone tutorials, 30.70% of those who had participated said there were problems with organisation and reception.

Telephone tutorials

(Question 8.5d)

When asked whether they would like to take part in telephone tutorials in the future, 20.8% of respondents said they would, 12.0% said they would in some subjects, 23.0% said the idea did not appeal and 44.3% said said they didn't know enough about them to comment.

This variable was significantly related to **age, degree enrolled and region.**

The 26 to 35 year age group was most enthusiastic about telephone tuutorials, with 44.37% saying they would like to take part or would like to take part in some subjects. (Chi Square = 18.03, df = 9, $p < .05$.)

Thirty eight point one five percent of Commerce and Economics students gave positive responses followed by Arts (30.35%) and Law (22.22%). (Chi Square = 28.33, df = 9, $p < .05$.)

Students in Western Queensland, Townsville and Cairns and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts were most positive about telephone tutorials (50.0%, 48.57%, 46.32%) compared to NSW and Victoria (29.03%) Rockhampton and Mackay (23.33%) Ipswich and Toowoomba (20.37%) and Brisbane (18.52%).

Study Schools

(Question 8.6a)

In 1983 the School of External Studies and Continuing Education conducted study schools on the St. Lucia campus. Attendance was not compulsory.

Students were asked whether they had attended a study school during the year: 35.00% said that they had done so. **Study School attendance** was significantly related to **sex, age and region:** 41.70% of females said they had attended a study school compared to 24.08% of males. (Chi Square = 11.19, df =1, $p < .01$.)

Attendance at study schools increased with age. (Chi Square = 17.54, df = 3, $p < .05$.)

Age	% attendance
25 years or less	22.50
26-35	31.66
36-45	41.94
46 or more	56.82

Attendance at study schools was also related to proximity to the St. Lucia campus. (Chi Square = 58.56, df = 6, $p < .01$.)

Region	% attendance
Brisbane	56.62
Ipswich/Toowoomba	52.54
Gold and sunshine Coasts	42.86
NSW/Victoria	25.71
Townsville/Cairns	25.72
Western Queensland	8.33
Rockhampton/Mackay	8.33

Study Schools

(Question 8.6b)

Ninety seven point one six percent of students who attended study schools said they were a useful aid to study.

Study Schools

(Question 8.6c)

Most of those who attended (95.65%) said that libary access was adequate during Study Schools. Those who did not find library access adequate said Thatcher hours were too short. Some students also made the comment that they would have liked access to the bookshop at that time.

Study schools

(Question 8.6d)

Major reasons for not attending study schools were: no time or money (65.37%), no wish to attend (8.17%), work commitments (11.28%), family commitments (7.00%) or the distance that had to be travelled (5.45%).

Reasons for not attending were related to **degree enrolled.** Commerce and Economics students were more likely to say they had no time or money to attend (82.22%) followed by

Arts (61.84%) Education (53.33%) and Law (42.86%). (Chi Square = 11.00, df = 3, $p < .05$.)

Lack of time and money was also a major reason for non-attendance by different regional groups and was more pressing in areas remote from Brisbane but excluding the Brisbane area itself where a fairly high percentage of respondents gave this reason. (Chi Square = 49.96, df = 3, $p < .01$)

Region	%
NSW and Victoria	80.76
Western Queensland	75.00
Townsville and Cairns	72.22
Rockhampton and Mackay	64.52
Brisbane	63.89
Ipswich and Toowoomba	60.71
Gold and Sunshine Coasts	46.67

Males were more likely than females to say that they had no wish to attend study schools (11.54% versus 6.25%). (Chi Square = 49.96, df = 3, $p < .01$)

4.11.5 Summary

About one third of respondents had no contact at all with their lecturers during the year, either face-to-face, by telephone or mail. Of those who did make contact there was a much higher percentage of females than males and higher percentages of older than younger students. A high percentage of students who made contact with their lecturers said this was useful to them.

About half the respondents made contact with administrative staff during the year and a high percentage said this was useful contact.

Though a low percentage of students made contact with the External Students Liaison Officer there was a high degree of satisfaction with this contact. Law students made most contact.

Usage and awareness of the Ansafone service was very low among all respondents with many students saying they did not need the service but some feeling disinclined to talk to an answering machine and reservations about the service being expressed more often by older students.

The incidence of involvement with telephone tutorials was also very low but most of those who participated found telephone tutorials useful. There was a high degree of ignorance about telephone tuorials and their value on the part of respondents. Most enthusiastic about future participation were students in the 26 to 35 year age group, Commerce and Economics students those living in Western Queensland.

Study schools were attended by about a third of respondents with females being more likely to attend than males students in the 36 to 45 year age group and those living closer to Brisbane being more likely to attend. There was a high degree of satisfaction with Study Schools among those who attended. Lack of time and money were major barriers to Study School attendance and this was more pressing in regions remote from Brisbane.

The following table summarises the pattern of use of services offered at the St. Lucia campus and the degree of satisfaction expressed with these services.

Service	% Contact (frequent and infrequent)	% Satisfied
Lecturers	66.8	94.21
Administrative staff	51.8	93.66
ESLO	11.4	95.56
Ansafone	4.50	-
Telephone tutorials	3.30	84.62
Study Schools	35.00	97.61

Library Services

Questionnaire Items

9.1(a) Did you use the postal service provided by Thatcher Library this year?

frequently
infrequently
not at all

9.1(b) If you used this service did you find it:

helpful
not helpful (please comment)

9.1(c) If you did not use Thatcher Library was it because:

You didn't need to read outside the course materials and set texts
You had other library sources
Service unsatisfactory in previous year
Other (please comment)

9.2 Ringrose Libraries

(a) Did you use Ringrose Libraries in Study Centres this year?

frequently
infrequently
no, prefer not to
not applicable, no access to Study Centres with Ringrose Libraries

(b) If you did use Ringrose Libraries did you find the service:

helpful
not helpful

(c) If you didn't use Ringrose Libraries this year was it because:

You didn't find the service helpful in the past
The books you wanted were not available
You live too far away
You have other library sources locally
You would prefer to use Thatcher
Your courses don't require outside reading
Other (please comment)

4.12 Library Services

4.12.1 Thatcher Library

(Question 9.1a)

Forty one point six percent of respondents said they used the postal library service provided by Thatcher Library frequently, a further 19.4% said that they used this service infrequently and 39.1% didn't use the service at all.

Use of Thatcher was significantly related to **sex** with more males than females not using the service (45.98% of males versus 35.77% of females not using Thatcher) but more males than females using the service frequently (45.93% versus 33.58% frequent use). (Chi Square = 5.78, df = 2, $p < .05$.)

Fifty nine point three seven percent of Commerce and Economics students didn't use the service at all followed by 38.46% of Law students, 35.20% of Arts and 29.35% of Education students. (Chi Square = 27.35, df = 6, $p < .01$.)

Use of Thatcher was related to **region** with 63.41% of Brisbane students not using the service followed by 51.43% of NSW and Victoria, 38.88% of Rockhampton and Mackay, 32.20% of Ipswich and Toowoomba, 30.76% of Western Queensland and 20.95% of the Gold and Sunshine Coasts. (Chi Square = 44.22, df = 12, $p < .01$)

Age was also significantly related to **use of Thatcher Library.** As students studied externally longer, frequency of use increased. (Chi Square = 14.36, df = 6, $p < .05$.)

Age	% non use
25 or less	44.88
26-35	39.47
36-45	27.45
46 or more	24.00

Thatcher Library

(Question 9.1b)

Of those students who used Thatcher Library, 99.59% found it helpful.

Thatcher Library

(Question 9.1c)

Reasons given for not using Thatcher were as follows:

Reason	%
No need to read outside	27.14
Other library sources	55.71
Service previously unsatisfactory	2.14
Other e.g. not useful for Law, cost of returing books, not required, not known.	17.14

4.12.2 Ringrose Libraries

(Question 9.2a)

Eleven point three percent of students said they used the service provided by the Ringrose Libraries frequently, a further 12.6% used this service infrequently, while 15.0% preferred not to use it and 61.2% said they had no access to Ringrose Libraries.

We grouped frequent and infrequent responses and compared these with "prefer not" and "no access" categories. This variable was significantly related to region.

The heaviest use was in Western Queensland (46.15%) followed by Rockhampton and Mackay (44.83%), the Gold and Sunshine Coasts (35.35%), Ipswich and Toowoomba (32.76%), Townsville and Cairns (30.56%), Brisbane (3.78%) and NSW and Victoria (3.78%). (Chi Square = 66.18, df = 12, $p < .01$.)

Ringrose Libraries

(Question 9.2b)

Ninety three point six seven percent of students who used Ringrose Libraries found the service helpful.

Ringrose Libraries

(Question 9.2c)

Main reasons for not using Ringrose Libraries were as follows:

Reasons	%
Libraries too far away	32.86%
Other services available	29.58%
Thatcher prefered	31.92%
Books not required	7.98%
Other e.g. time,distance problems	11.74%

4.12.3 Summary

Over sixty percent of students used the postal library service provided by Thatcher Library during the year. Use of this service was related to sex (females being more frequent users), region (students on the Gold and Sunshine Coasts being the most frequent users) and age (older students being more frequent users). Of those students who used the service an extremely high percentage were satisfied with it. Ringrose libraries were used less frequently by about a quarter of respondents but once again a high percentage were pleased with the service.

Assessment Procedures

Questionnaire Items

10.1 Assignments

(a) Did you always receive your assignment topics in time to complete the assignments?

yes
no (please comment)

(b) Was it always clear what was expected of you in doing the assignments?

yes
no (please comment)

(c) Were you always able to locate the books necessary to prepare your assignments satisfactorily?

yes
no (please comment)

(d) Did your course materials always arrive in time to prepare your assignments satisfactorily?

yes
no (please comment)

(e) Was the turnaround time on assignments always satisfactory?

yes
no (please comment)

(f) Were the comments on assignments always helpful in your study?

yes
no (please comment)

(g) What type of feedback do you think you really need on assignments?

10.2 Examinations

(a) Did you always have enough material to prepare for your exams?

not applicable, no exams
yes
no (please comment)

(b) Would you find it helpful to receive copies of recent examination papers with your course materials?

not applicable, no exams
yes
no

(c) Were the examination arrangements satisfactory?

not applicable, no exams
yes
no (please comment)

4.13 Assessment Procedures

4.13.1 Assignments

(Question 10.1a)

Students were asked whether assignment topics always arrived in time for them to complete their assignments. Ninety point one percent said that they did, 8.4% that they did not and 1.5% had no assignments in their subjects.

4.13.2 Assignments

(Question 10.1b)

When asked whether it was always clear what was expected of them is assignments, 72.1% said that it was, 26.3% said that it was not and 1.5% had no assignments.

Clarity of assignments was related to **age.** Students aged 46 years or more were less likely to say that assignment expectations were clear (56.09%) than younger groups: 25 or less (77.92%), 26-35 (70.45%), 36-45 (82.41%). (Chi Square = 11.61, df = 3, $p < .01$.)

Those students for whom assignment expectations were not clear gave a variety of reasons:

lack of understanding of topics
insufficient guidelines for preparation
ambiguity of questions
misleading information
assignments due too close to start of semester.

Assignments

(Question 10.1c)

Seventy nine point nine percent of students said they were always able to locate the books necessary to prepare assignments, 16.8% that they could not and 3.3% did not need books.

Those who could not locate books for assignments gave a variety of reasons:

they didn't know which books they needed
there were too few books listed
they had no book list
books were unavailable.

Whether assignment books could be located was related to **GPA.** Pass students (GPA 4) were less likely to say they could locate books (74.12%) followed by GPA 3 (80.77%), GPA 6+ (87.50), GPA 5 (91.42%). (Chi Square = 14.32, df = 3, $p < .01$.)

Assignments

(Question 10.1d)

Seventy nine point one percent of respondents said that their course materials always arrived in time to prepare assignments, 19.1% that they did not and 1.8% didn't need course

materials for assignments or had no assignments. Most students who did not receive materials in time said only some materials were late or that there were administrative problems.

Assignments

(Question 10.1e)

Seventy three point two percent of respondents said the turnaround time for marking assignments was satisfactory, 25.3% that it was not and 1.5% had no assignments. Most students who were dissatisfied with the turnaround time complained that it was unduly long.

Assignments

(Question 10.1f)

Seventy two point one percent of respondents said the comments on assignments were helpful to their study. Those who were not satisfied said there were too few comments, that they were illegible, too subjective, vague or irrelevant.

Attitudes to feedback on assignments were related to **degree enrolled and years of study.** Commerce and Economics students were least satisfied with feedback they received. Only 60.94% claimed they were satisfied, followed by Arts (74.19%), Law (75.00%) and Education (83.33%). (Chi Square = 8.22, df = 3, $p < .05$.)

Students were more satisfied with the feedback they received as their years of study increased. (Chi Square = 7.61, df = 3, $p < .05$)

Years of study	% satisfied
7+	81.63%
5-6	85.71%
3-4	71.43%
1-2	68.79%

Assignments

(Question 10.1g)

When asked what kind of feedback they really needed on assignments, a number of responses were given.

Responses	%
Feedback on errors	25.5
Feedback on how to approach assignments	13.8
Feedback on content	12.4
Feedback on style	8.5
Examples of assignments	7.4
More detail	5.3
Fair criticism	5.3
Personalised feedback	3.5
Prompt feedback	3.2
Other	15.1%

4.13.3 Examinations

(Question 10.2a)

Students were asked whether they always had enough material to prepare for examinations: 90.70% said that they did, 6.3% that they did not and 3.1% had no examinations.

Those students who did not have enough material to prepare for examinations said that they needed more information, more tutorials, previous exam papers, more books, sample solutions to problems and access to Case materials in Law subjects.

Examinations

(Question 10.2b)

When asked whether it would be helpful to receive copies of recent examination papers with Course Materials, 96.7% of students said that it would.

Examinations

(Question 10.2c)

Ninety point four percent of students said that arrangements for taking examinations were satisfactory.

4.13.4 Summary

Although over 90% of students said that their assignment topics always arrived in time to be useful to them, there were some problems with understanding what was required in the assignments, with locating books for the assignments, and with the arrival of course materials

in time to complete the assignments.

About 28% of students were not happy with the comments they received on assignments and Commerce and Economics students were least happy with the feedback they received.

Examination arrangements seemed to present few problems for students.

Further Comments

Questionnaire Item

11. Would you like to make any further comments on your experiences as an external student at the University of Queensland?

4.14 Further Comments

(Question 11)

The following comments were made in response to the question about experiences as an external student at the University of Queensland.

Response	N	%
Book price list available	0.3	1.2
Information on areas of subjects most important	1.3	6.0
Law tutorials available for external students	0.8	3.6
Information - future subject availability	5	1.3
EC110 and EC134 returned to original split format (EC132/133 etc)	1	0.3
More choice in Commerce electives offered externally	3	0.8
Lecturers' comments about books on reading lists	1	0.3
Commerce Dept. does not understand problems of external students	5	1.3
Information - subjects' relevance to degree and employment/course planning	3	0.8
Access to law cases/duplicates needed	4	1.0
Feedback about survey	1	0.3
Study school arrangements - child care and accommodation - cost and flexibility for external students	0.3	1.2

University counselling service - cater for needs of external students	1	0.3
Music, History subjects through external studies	1	0.3
Tapes of lectures at tutorials and study schools for those who cannot attend	1	0.3
Evaluation of each subject	1	0.3
Material for subjects available before semester	1	0.3
More full year and 2nd semester subjects	1	0.3
Assessment negotiable	9	2.3
More tutorials	7	1.8
Half-year exams for full-year subjects	1	0.3
Hebrew subjects through external studies	1	0.3
More Economics and Mathematics subjects offered	1	0.3
More subjects in semester 1	1	0.3
No need for first semester subject to be examined at end of second semester	1	0.3
10 credit point full-year subjects reduced to 1st semester or expanded to more credit points	1	0.3
Relevant information from University Calendar & UDHB included in External Studies Handbook	1	0.3
External Studies facilities advertised more widely	1	0.3
Broadening of higher degree programs available	1	0.3
Psychology subjects available	1	0.3
Wider range of subjects	6	1.5
Thatcher loans too short when postage time considered	1	0.3
More computer application in all areas	2	0.5
More geography subjects offered	1	0.3
Notes need updating	2	0.5
More information - campus facilities and resources	1	0.3
Study schools in school holidays	1	0.3
Study schools on weekends	1	0.3
Course guides available before enrolment	1	0.3
More video material	1	0.3
Lecturers unavailable in Mathematics	1	0.3
More language subjects	1	0.3
Missing	313	78.8
Total	397	100